



Preparing for the GRE

William J. Higgins



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**TRAINING &
EDUCATION**

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH




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Why are we here?

- Review the application / acceptance process
- Review the GRE and relevant information
- Suggest a method and schedule of study
- Develop a plan to maximize your scores on the GRE



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What does a graduate student do?



Higgins's List of Things Great Grad Students Do:

- Read well
- Speak well
- Manage time
 - Know their 'good' times
- Play hard and sleep fast
- Have solid personal relationships
- Maintain a positive attitude





The application process looks more difficult and intimidating than it really is





Finding your Graduate Program

- Defining your interests
- Locating resources to assist you locate appropriate programs
- Doing your homework
- Establish your criteria
- Making it personal





Overview of application process

- GRE exam
 - When?
 - Which tests?
- On line or paper applications?
- Personal Statements!
- Your Letters
- Transcripts
- Follow up letters & a phone call
- Interviews & visit days
- Apply early!




Selection Criteria

- GPA - overall and science
- GRE scores
- Application essays
- Research Experience
- Letters




Graduate Record Examination

www.gre.org



Two questions for today:

1. What is at stake with the GRE? (How important is it to your application?)
2. Can I really make a difference in my score by spending some preparation time?



N.B. - You **ARE** a test taker!



www.ets.org/gre/

For Test Takers

For Institutions >

Taking a GRE® test is an essential first step toward a graduate or business degree.
Learn why >

If you are taking the GRE General Test soon, or need your score reports before November 2011, you should take the current GRE General Test. Register early to get your preferred test date and location.

Important News:
The GRE revised General Test is coming August 2011. There are a lot of exciting changes in the works. New question types. New test-taker friendly format. And many more benefits.

Plus, you can save 50% if you test between August – September 2011. See the special score reporting schedule in the options > for you >

Learn more about the GRE revised General Test >

General Test >

(if you test before August 1, 2011)

- About the Test
- Register for the Test
- Test Centers and Dates
- Prepare for the Test
- On Test Day
- Scores
- Test Takers with Disabilities

Subject Tests >

Are you majoring in any of the Sciences, Math, Computers or English Literature? Take a GRE Subject Test — the test that shows what you know and helps you get noticed.

The GRE revised General Test is Coming

Find out why it's good news for you! Learn more >

GRE General Test for Business School

Hundreds of business schools now accept the GRE General Test for admission to their MBA programs. Learn more >

Tools for Success

GRE® Search Service, ETS® Personal Potential Index, the My Credentials Vault™ service and more. Learn more >

ETS Home > GRE > General Test > About the Test

Revised General Test
If you test on or after August 1, 2013

General Test
If you test before August 1, 2013

> About the Test

- Test Content and Structure
- GRE Test for Business School
- Test Fairness and Validity
- Fees
- Bulletin and Forms

About the GRE® General Test

What Is It?

The GRE® General Test is your gateway to graduate programs and an essential early step along your career path.

Graduate programs and business schools use GRE® scores to evaluate your readiness for graduate-level work. The GRE General Test measures verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking and analytical writing skills that are not related to any specific field of study.

- Analytical Writing** — Measures critical thinking and analytical writing skills, specifically the test taker's ability to articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively
- Verbal Reasoning** — Measures reading comprehension skills and verbal and analogical reasoning skills, focusing on the test taker's ability to analyze and evaluate written material
- Quantitative Reasoning** — Measures problem-solving ability, focusing on basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and data analysis

GRE General Test

Three sections
and
some other stuff

The GRE: General Test

- Verbal (200 - 800)
- Quantitative (200 - 800)
- Analytical Writing (1 - 6 scale)
 - Issue Task
 - Argument Task

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GRE General Test Overview

What Is It?

The GRE® General Test measures verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking, and analytical writing skills that have been acquired over a long period of time and that are not related to any specific field of study.

Verbal Reasoning — The skills measured include the test taker's ability to

- analyze and evaluate written material and synthesize information obtained from it.
- analyze relationships among component parts of sentences
- recognize relationships between words and concepts.

Quantitative Reasoning — The skills measured include the test taker's ability to

- understand basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis
- reason quantitatively
- solve problems in a quantitative setting.

Analytical Writing — The skills measured include the test taker's ability to

- articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively
- examine claims and accompanying evidence
- support ideas with relevant reasons and examples
- sustain a well-focused, coherent discussion
- control the elements of standard written English.

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Computer Version

- > 3.25 hours
- Analytical Writing first!
- Random order for verbal and quantitative sections
- You can't go back and you must answer questions in order
 - Click *Next* and *Answer Confirmed*
- You must be able to move on and forget previous questions


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Computer-Based General Test

Section	# of Questions	Time (min)
Analytical Writing	1 Issue Task	45
	1 Argument Task	30
Verbal	30	30
Quantitative	28	45
Pretest	Varies	Varies
Research	Varies	Varies




Computer-Based General Test

Section	Minutes # of Questions	Time/question
Verbal	30/30	1 min/question
Quantitative	45/28	1.6 min Or 96 sec/question



Quantitative Test Timing

Question Number	Running Time
5	8 min (6)
10	16 min (13)
15	24 min (22)
20	32 min
25	40 min



General Test Scoring

- *Adaptive* Scoring
- Number of Questions answered
- Performance on those questions
- Statistical characteristics
- *Hint:* do not guess but do finish!

- Number of Questions answered
 - # correct minus one-quarter of number *answered* wrong
- Performance on those questions
- Statistical characteristics
- *Hint*: do not guess but do finish!

"Because both sections are computer adaptive, the questions presented are selected to reflect your performance on preceding questions and the requirements of the test design. Test design factors that influence which questions are presented to you include (1) the statistical characteristics of the questions already answered, (2) the required variety of questions types, and (3) the appropriate coverage of content."

www.gre.org/faqnew.html

[illegible]

FOR 1

[ETS Home](#) > [GRE](#) > [General Test](#) > [About the Test](#)

Revised General Test
(If you test on or after
August 1, 2011)

General Test
(If you test before
August 1, 2011)

► **About the Test**

GRE Test for Business School

Test Fairness and Validity

Fees
Rules

About the GRE® General Test

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- **Verbal Reasoning** — Measures reading comprehension skills and verbal and analogical reasoning skills, focusing on the test taker's ability to analyze and evaluate written material
- **Quantitative Reasoning** — Measures problem-solving ability, focusing on basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and data analysis

There are three types of Reading Comprehension questions:

Multiple-choice Questions — Select One or More Answer Choices: These provide three answer choices and ask you to select all that are correct; one, two or all three of the answer choices may be correct. To gain credit for these questions, you must select all the correct answers, and only those; there is no credit for partially correct answers.


Reading comprehension passages are drawn from the physical sciences, the biological sciences, the social sciences, the arts and humanities, and everyday topics, and are based on material found in books and periodicals, both academic and nonacademic. The passages range in length from one paragraph to four or five paragraphs.

Here's what is new for the Verbal Reasoning section:

- Antonyms and analogies have been removed from the test, so there are no questions that test vocabulary out of context.
- **New Text Completion questions** test your ability to interpret, evaluate and reason from what you've read. Text Completion questions test this ability by omitting crucial words from short passages, requiring you to fill them in by selecting words or phrases. [See sample questions to learn more.](#)
- **New Sentence Equivalence questions** test your ability to reach a conclusion about how a sentence should be completed while focusing on the meaning of the whole sentence. [See sample questions to learn more.](#)
- There are more **Reading Comprehension questions** on the test, including new types of questions, such as selecting multiple correct answer choices instead of just one, or highlighting a sentence within a reading passage to answer the question. [See sample questions to learn more.](#)

What you need to know about the new score scale

- **Verbal Reasoning scores** will be reported on a new **130 – 170** score scale, in 1-point increments (versus 200 – 800 in 10-point increments).
- **Quantitative Reasoning scores** will be reported on a new **130 – 170** score scale, in 1-point increments (versus 200 – 800 in 10-point increments).
- **Analytical Writing scores** will continue to be reported on the same 0 – 6 score level, in half-point increments.



[GRE Practice General Test](#) — Contains one full-length paper-based GRE General Test, test-taking strategies, sample Verbal and Quantitative questions with explanations, sample Analytical Writing topics, and scored sample essays and reader commentary. It is sent to individuals who register for the paper-based GRE General Test or may be downloaded here.


[An Introduction to the Analytical Writing Section of the GRE General Test](#) — Contains a description of the Analytical Writing section, strategies for each task, directions, scoring information, scoring guides, score level descriptions, a sample test, and scored essay responses with reader commentary.

[Issue topics](#) and [Argument topics](#) are available for review.

[Preparing for the Verbal and Quantitative Sections of the GRE General Test](#) - Contains sample questions with explanations.

[Math Review](#) — Contains information on the mathematical skills and concepts likely to be tested on the GRE General Test.

[Test-taking Strategies](#) for the computer-based and the paper-based General Test



This practice book contains

- one full-length paper-based GRE General Test
- test-taking strategies
- sample verbal and quantitative questions with explanations
- sample analytical writing topics, scored sample essays, and reader commentary

Become familiar with


- test structure and content
- test instructions and answering procedures


Compare your practice test results on the verbal and quantitative sections with the performance of those who took the sections at a GRE test administration. Compare your essay

GRE
 Graduate Record Examinations®

**PRACTICE
 GENERAL
 TEST**

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The test-taking strategies in this publication are appropriate for use at a paper-based administration and do not pertain to the computer-based General Test. Individuals planning to take the computer-based General Test are advised to prepare for the test using GRE POWERPREP® software.





Quantitative

- Basic concepts in mathematics
 - Arithmetic, algebra, geometry, & data analysis
 - Reason quantitatively
 - Quantitative problem solving

Quantitative Section



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Quantitative Section





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- [An Introduction to the Analytical Writing Section of the GRE General Test](#) - Contains a description of the analytical writing section, strategies for each task, directions, scoring information, scoring guides, score level descriptions, a sample test, and scored essay responses with reader commentary. (FREE)

View the entire pool of [Issue topics](#) and [Argument topics](#).



Verbal

- In written passages and sentences:
 - Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize
 - Analyze relationships in sentences
 - Recognize relationships



You must:

- use PowerPrep software to do sample tests
- view all of the topics and scored sample essays for the analytical writing section
- download and use the content information on the verbal and quantitative sections



Computer Version

- On screen clock
 - Leave it on and use it!!!
 - Time / # questions = minutes / question
- PowerPrep software is a must
- You must learn & practice to be able to “pull the trigger”
!!!!

Think Organize Construct



The analytical writing section is a section first introduced in October 2002 that tests your critical thinking and analytical writing skills. It assesses your ability to identify and support complex ideas, analyze an argument, and sustain a focused and coherent discussion. It does not assess specific content knowledge.

Analytical Writing



- Articulate complex ideas clearly
- Examine claims and evidence
- Support ideas with relevant reasons and examples
- Well-focused, coherent discussion
- Standard written English

On computer only!

Analytical Writing: Overview

- A 45 minute *Present Your Perspective on an Issue*
 - There is no correct answer or position!
 - Readers are looking for the skill with which you articulate, develop, and support your argument.
 - Discuss the issue, take a position, and defend it.






Always listen to good advice...

Purchase, read, and use,



The Elements of Style

by Will Strunk and E. B. White!!!!

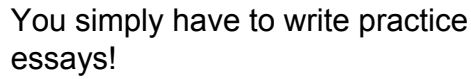
How to practice for this section?



- Review 6 & 5 scoring essays in GRE Sample Test booklet.
- Read question carefully!
- Identify your position or ideas.
- Hopefully it is related to some knowledge base or experience.
- Evidence in support?
- Outline!!!!
- Strunk & White essentials!
- Clock!
- Write and review answers in a group of 3 or more.

Practice by



- Reviewing sample high scoring arguments in GRE materials.
- Write 5 or 6 of your own and have them reviewed by your group.

[illegible][illegible]



Analyze an Argument

An assessment of your ability to understand, analyze, and evaluate arguments and then convey your analysis in writing.

Analyze an Argument


You are *not* asked to discuss the validity or truth of the statements in an argument. You are asked to decide whether the conclusions and inferences are validly drawn from the statements.

Argument Topics

The following appeared in a letter to an editor.

"In many countries, wood is the primary fuel used for heating and cooking, but wood smoke can cause respiratory and eye problems, and extensive use of wood causes deforestation, a major environmental problem. In contrast, charcoal, made by partially burning wood in a controlled process, is a fuel that creates less smoke than wood does. Moreover, although charcoal costs slightly more than wood, less charcoal is needed to produce the same amount of heat. Therefore, people who use wood as their primary fuel can, without experiencing economic hardship, switch to charcoal and can thereby improve their health and preserve the environment."




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The following appeared in an editorial in a business magazine.

"Although the sales of Whirlwind video games have declined over the past two years, a recent survey of video-game players suggests that this sales trend is about to be reversed. The survey asked video-game players what features they thought were most important in a video game. According to the survey, players prefer games that provide lifelike graphics, which require the most up-to-date computers. Whirlwind has just introduced several such games with an extensive advertising campaign directed at people 10 to 25 years old, the age-group most likely to play video games. It follows, then, that the sales of Whirlwind video games are likely to increase dramatically in the next few months."


The following appeared in the editorial section of Monroetown's local newspaper.

"Mayor Brown was recently re-elected by a clear majority of 52 percent of Monroetown's voters. Her re-election, however, does not show that most people in our town favored Mayor Brown's proposal for tax reduction over that of her opponent, Mr. Greene, who proposed raising taxes to improve education. It has been shown that voters nationwide tend to re-elect people already in office, regardless of candidates' proposals. In fact, a local survey after the election showed most people in Monroetown disagreed with Mayor Brown's proposal. Clearly most people in Monroetown favor improving education and therefore approve of Mr. Greene's proposal despite the fact that they did not vote for him."



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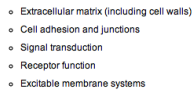
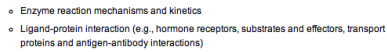
Practice tests:
use under game conditions !





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Subject Test



Which one?
Content?







So how do I begin to study?

Download Content
and
use the
Higgins Wall Method



So how do I begin to study?

Subject content list!
Practice tests !!!
Textbooks !!!
Sample problems !!!



What is the goal of this
series of workshops?

Your study schedule

- Time on task
- Not every subject gets the same allotment
- Time of day
- Location, location, location
- Marathons don't work
- Mix up the subjects in your study schedule
- Calendar.....

Your study calendar



- When ?
- What ?
- Where ?
- Check for understanding !

Long term considerations

Identify and study what you don't know!
 Use your calendar to set up the schedule
 Cross off items as you complete learning tasks
 Note cards for formulae
 Obtain a 'deep understanding' by using a group
 Gain confidence through practice



- Sleep schedule
 - No late nights!
- Maintain exercise or begin to take walks
- Eat well !
- Do not clean your room or do your laundry if it isn't part of your routine.
- Go to the movies, pick up a book, or utilize some other reward.

- Normal, routine day
- Do not goof off at work - keep busy
 - Plan to be busy with something rewarding
- Leave a little early
- No study!
 - If you must, only 7 items


The Night Before:



- Whatever
- Watch what you eat!!!!
- Be careful with medications
- Don't go to bed too early or too late
 - No naps!!!
- Look over what you have learned and be confident (7 items!)

The Night Before:

- Assemble what you need to take to the test center:
 - Your admission ticket
 - Photo ID
 - Exact name, photo, & signature!
- *Sharpened pencils & clean eraser*
- Lay out your clothes



Test Day

- Be awake > 2 hours before the exam
- Shower and dress for success
- Eat sanely
 - Caffeine? Sugar? Medications?
- Walk and review 7 items (if you must!)
- Arrive to the site early but do not enter early
- Avoid stress mongers
- Be prepared for the unprepared

Exam strategies

- On the clock!
- How much time per question?
 - Construct a table: time vs. question number
- Other strategies?

As always with multiple choice exams and especially since you cannot reconsider, do not look at the answers until you know it. Then find it, mark it, and move on!
